

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**McIntosh School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2006-
2007**

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Dates of On Site Visit: November 29, 2006

Date of Report: January 4, 2007

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

- Promising Practice** The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
- Meets Requirements** The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
- Needs Assistance** The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.
- Needs Intervention** The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement and is out of compliance.
- Not applicable** In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.
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Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through

performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Child find articles
- Screening announcement and list
- Referral/evaluation/placement data
- File reviews
- Enrollment data
- Annual application for IDEA funds
- General district information
- Part B Application for funds
- Data table I, age and placement alternatives
- Parent rights brochure
- Data by age and placement alternative
- District dropout rate
- SAT 9 data
- Staff interviews
- Exit data table H
- Content standards
- Personnel data
- Staff certification
- Contract staff licenses
- District supervision/evaluation policy
- CSPD needs assessment data
- Teacher surveys

Promising Practice

The district has an effective pre-referral and referral system in place to ensure students are identified without unnecessary delay, which exceeds this requirement as it is utilizing a response to intervention program. This program, through the TAT process, requires that two interventions must be incorporated within the regular classroom and progress monitored weekly before a child is referred for further testing. If parents request testing, interventions and monitoring are put in place during the evaluation period. Through school-wide testing, at-risk students are identified early and interventions put into place within the regular classroom prior to referral to special education.

The district uses data-based decision-making procedures to review and analyze school district-level data to determine if the school district is making progress toward the state's performance goals and indicators. The district exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices. These programs include

curriculum-based assessment, Response to Intervention, Accelerated Reading and Math, Success Maker, and curriculum-mapping.

Meets Requirements

The McIntosh School District has an established and effectively implemented ongoing child find system to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities, ages birth through 21 years, who may need special education. The district does have an effective pre-referral and referral system in place which ensures students are identified without unnecessary delay.

The district has no private schools; however, if the district did, it would provide for children with disabilities that are eligible for special education and are voluntarily enrolled in private schools by their parents to participate in services in accordance with the requirements of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

The McIntosh School District uses data-based decision making procedures to review and analyze school district level data to determine if the district is making progress towards the state's performance goals and indicators. Graduation rates are commensurate with students with no disabilities and dropout rate has remained constant at zero.

The district has not had a student receive a long-term suspension or expulsion. However, if this should occur, the district would review and analyze discipline data and revise policies/procedures if significant discrepancies were to occur between the long-term suspension and expulsion rates for children with and without disabilities.

Based on the district policies and practices regarding employment and supervision of staff employed or with whom the district contracts, an adequate supply of personnel are employed who are appropriately supervised and fully licensed or certified to work with children with disabilities. The district consistently meets the requirements for personnel development needs and takes appropriate action to meet those identified needs. Staff input is gained through surveys to determine development needs and training is provided through Northwest Area Schools and in-school training sessions

Needs Improvement

The district has met the referral requirement; however, it has identified the need to have referral documentation available in all files of children initially referred for special education services.

The steering committee determined that parents need to be provided with training sessions to help them feel more involved and knowledgeable in the education of their children.

Validation Results

Promising Practice

The monitoring team validated the district's pre-referral/referral system and data-based process as promising practices.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for Principle One: General Supervision, as concluded by the steering committee. In student file reviews, documentation was found for referrals and a plan is in place to address parent training; therefore, all areas meet compliance.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Child count data
- District budget
- Annual IDEA application for funds
- Parent surveys
- Age and placement data table I
- Student file reviews

Meets requirements

Based on parent surveys, staff surveys, state tables, and preschool screening records, the steering committee determined that the school district does provide a free and appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities. The district has no students with disabilities that have been suspended for more than 10 days or expelled. The comprehensive plan outlines the procedure to follow if it would be necessary.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for Principle Two: Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Student file reviews
- Parent surveys
- Interviews
- Prior notice/consent form
- District procedure
- Student file reviews
- Teacher surveys
- MDT/eligibility report form
- Table A general district information
- Eligibility technical assistance guide
- In-service training agenda
- Cooperative forms
- Monitoring report
- CSPD needs assessment

Meets requirements

Based on file review and the comprehensive plan, McIntosh School District ensures the evaluation and reevaluation procedures and instruments meet the minimum requirements. The district ensures the proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process. In addition, the district ensures that reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requires to ensure students are appropriately evaluated for continuing eligibility.

Needs improvement

The district has identified parent input into evaluation process and evaluation timelines (acquiring timeline extension if needed) as areas to improve.

In addition, the district has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance. The percentage of special education students in the district is highly disproportionate with the percentage of those placed state wide, especially in the area of specific learning disabilities. The reason for this is in direct comparison of the practice of retaining students, then using the state mandated practice of using age standard scores for children who have been retained.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that the district is meeting the requirement for Principle Three: Appropriate Evaluation. In addition, parent input into the evaluation process was documented, evaluation timelines were consistently met and disproportionality have been addressed; therefore, these areas also meet requirements.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Parent rights brochure
- Prior notice form
- Surrogate parent technical assistance guide
- Data table L, Complaints and Hearings

Meets requirements

In the student files reviewed by the district, the Individual Education Program (IEP) front page indicates parents received a copy of parent rights and it was reviewed. Parent surveys indicated they have been fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication (if necessary) of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought.

The school district's comprehensive plan provides procedures on procedural safeguards, which provides the parents of a child in need of special education or special education and related services with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education. The comprehensive plan outlines policies and procedures for responding to complaints and due process hearing.

Needs Improvement

The district has identified specific graduation requirements one year prior to graduation as an area to improve.

Out of Compliance

The district does not meet the surrogate requirement, as no list of surrogate parents is available in the district.

Validation Results

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that the district is meeting the requirement for Principle Four: Procedural Safeguards. In addition graduation was addressed where appropriate and the district has a list of surrogate parents available in the district; therefore, these areas also meet requirements.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher surveys
- Parent surveys
- Student file reviews
- Early Intervention (Part C) Exit Information
- Hearings
- Monitoring
- Comprehensive plan
- Prior notice form
- Parent right brochure
- IEP form
- Child count

Promising practice

The district exceeds transition requirement through the implementation of innovative, high quality programming and instructional practices such as the following: Through Northwest Area Schools, vocational units are made available on a rotating basis. This allows students to experience a variety of life skills. The school, in conjunction with businesses in town, provides work experience to students through a pre-employment class, in which they are given elective credit.

The district exceeds the requirement, which ensures an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices such as these: The district/agency is currently using the Aimsweb and DIBELS computer evaluation systems to benchmark students' current academic levels, utilize scientific research to determine adequate growth (used to develop goals and objectives), and monitor student growth weekly through computerized charts and graphs. Response to intervention is monitored weekly and reported to student and parents.

Meets requirements

The McIntosh School District ensures that written notice is provided for all IEP meetings, and includes all required content. In files reviewed by the district, the IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership and meets all identified responsibilities, and that the IEP contains required content. The district has policies and procedures in place to ensure an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student

In addition, file reviews completed by the district support transition plans for students are a coordinated set of activities, reflecting student strengths and interests, to prepare them for post school activities.

Needs improvement

The district has identified that IEPs need to contain written justification which describes why instruction for the student could not be conducted in the regular classrooms setting. The district also needs to ensure that goals and objectives contain all required components, as well as relate to the disability. Intervention strategies need to be developed for students with behavior issues.

Validation Results**Promising Practice**

The monitoring team validated the district's promising practices for Principle Five: Individualized Education Program.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that the district is meeting the requirements for Principle Five: Individualized Education Program. In addition, justification for placement and behavior intervention strategies were consistently addressed; therefore, these areas also meet requirements.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Parent surveys
- Teacher surveys

- Student file reviews
- Data table F placement alternatives
- Child count data

Promising practice

The district exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices. There is a two-day a week preschool for all children in which special needs students are included for a majority of the day. Also, the district percentage of students placed in regular classroom with modifications is much higher than the state average, and the number in the resource room is lower than the state average, indicating that children are educated with their peers the majority of the time, with the assistance of special education staff. Regular education teachers also make the accommodations and modifications necessary for these students to be successful in the regular classroom.

Validation Results**Promising Practice**

The monitoring team validated the district's promising practices for Principle Six: Least Restrictive Environment.

Meets Requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee that the district is meeting the requirements for Principle Six: Least Restrictive Environment.